

Alecandria “Alec” Quinn

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Portfolio: <https://alec.home-share.me/>

Summary

Aspiring curator with an M.A. in Museum Studies and a background in paleontology and exhibition development. Experienced across the full curatorial arc - object and historical research, collections cataloguing, acquisition requests, and label writing; through roles at the Smithsonian's American History and Natural History Museums. Known for making complex subjects approachable and engaging. Committed to creating inclusive, research-grounded exhibitions that audiences remember.

Skills

- Visitor Engagement & Informal Education
- Inquiry-Based Learning & Facilitation
- Curatorial Practice & Historical Research
- Collections Management, Cataloguing, Documentation, Database Systems
- Exhibition Development, Design & Installation
- Science Writing & Public Engagement
- Public Speaking, Teaching & Audience Engagement
- A/V Equipment & Technical Setup
- Fossil Preparation, Jacketing, Casting, 3D Modeling
- Adobe Illustrator, Canva, Scientific Drawing
- Event Planning & Program Support

Experience

Smithsonian NMAH, Washington DC — Facilitator

June 2026 – Present

- Facilitated hands-on, inquiry-based activities to inspire visitor engagement with American history across age groups and learning styles.
- Ensured a positive visitor experience through conversation, experimentation, and age-appropriate engagement.
- Maintained materials, interactives, and equipment in collaboration with the Experience Development Team.
- Recommended improvements to activity materials and signage, and contributed ideas for new programming aligned with museum priorities.
- Prototyped new content, tested signage, and assessed the efficacy of learning experiences to improve visitor outcomes.

Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC — Visitor Service Representative

April 2026 – June 2026

- Welcomed and oriented visitors, providing information on exhibitions, programs, safety protocols, and institutional policies to ensure an accessible and engaging experience.
- Monitored visitor flow, conducted gallery walk-throughs, and reported safety, accessibility, or maintenance concerns to appropriate staff.
- Supported tours, educational programs, volunteer guidance, and digital interactive upkeep to enhance the overall visitor experience.
- Completed SI Cares Ambassador Training to enhance visitor experience and institutional impact.

Smithsonian NMAH, Washington DC — Curatorial Exhibit Development Intern

Sept 2025 – May 2026

- Gained hands-on experience across curatorial practice, from object research and collections management to conceptual exhibition development.
- Researched and drafted acquisition requests and object labels for current and upcoming exhibitions.
- Conducted historical and material cultural research to support exhibition narratives and curatorial interpretation.
- Researched underrepresented figures in American entertainment history, including S.H. Dudley and Bert Williams (Black Vaudeville performers), Jack Soo (Japanese American comedian), and Phyllis Diller (female comedian who challenged gender roles).
- Wrote web exhibits for the comedy collections including Rodney Dangerfield, Moms Mabley, and Jim Henson and the Muppets.
- Catalogued collections using the SOVA Database System and Mimsy XG.
- Collaborated with the supervisor to edit and enhance the visual layout of a book manuscript.

Smithsonian NMNH, Washington DC — Paleobiology Intern – Sundance Fossil Insect Collection

May 2025 – Sept 2025

- Prepared, photographed, and catalogued fragile specimens using professional standards.
- Numbered and databased insect fossil slabs for research access.

Smithsonian NMNH, Washington DC — Fossils Lab Volunteer

Dec 2024 – Present

- Prepared and stabilized fossils for long-term preservation through jacketing and rehousing.
- Created scientific drawings with a pantograph to support documentation.

Smithsonian NMNH, Washington DC — School Volunteer Assistant

Sept 2024 – May 2025

- Facilitated inquiry-based learning for K-12 students, guiding them through hands-on activities in paleontology and geology, and adapting content for different age groups and learning styles.
- Handled collections and supported education programming.

Appalachian State University, Boone NC — Museum & Outreach Intern

Jan 2023 – May 2024

- Developed exhibitions and outreach programs including a paleo art display and fossil fairs.
- Designed and delivered an exhibit on dinosaur illustration at the Virginia Museum of Natural History.
- Created molds, casts, and 3D models for collection and display
- Created graphic designs for teaching posters using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop
- Led the Finding Fossils lab, guiding students through the handling and care of fossils.

Appalachian State University, Boone NC — Paleo Undergrad Research Assistant

Summer 2023

- Collaborated with experts in paleontology to determine the accuracy of the Otodus megalodon jaw and tooth displays in museums.
- Created a 3D model of an upper tooth file of Otodus megalodon for museum use.

Creative Experience/Public Engagement

Stand Up Comedy

Jan 2023 – Present

- Chief Operating Officer – Capital Laughs, Washington DC (July 2025 – May 2026)
- Producer – X Marks the Spot Comedy Shows, Washington DC (Feb 2025 – Present)
- Coordinated venue logistics, show setup, A/V equipment, staffing, and ticket sales for weekly live events.
- Managed social media promotion across Instagram, Facebook, and Eventbrite to drive audience engagement and event attendance.
- Created promotional advertisements using Canva.
- Designed and maintained websites for X Marks the Spot Comedy.

Publications & Presentations

- **Smithsonian Voices article:** “Meet the National Museum of Natural History Volunteer Preserving Prehistory One Microfossil at a Time” (Apr 2025)

- **Conference Talk and Research Paper:** “Analyzing Reconstructions of the Giant Fossil Shark *Otodus megalodon* and Proposing a New Process Behind “*megalodon*” Exhibit Development.” – SVP Annual Conference, 2024
- **Conference Talk and Research Paper:** “Analyzing Reconstructions of the Giant Fossil Shark *Otodus megalodon* and Proposing a New Process Behind “*megalodon*” Exhibit Development.” – Southeastern GSA Conference, 2024
- **Research Paper:** “Factors that Contributed to the *Tyrannosaurus Rex* Arm Length.”

Field Study Experience

- **Triassic Summer Field Study:** prospecting in TX, NM, UT, CO; data collection and museum behind-the-scenes.
- **Geology Field Study** (NC/TN): geological mapping and data collection.
- **Italy Field Camp:** six-week field mapping and collaboration with Italian students and faculty.

Professional Recognition

- **SVP 2026 Calendar Cover Feature** – Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2026)

Professional Development

- Museum Registration Methods, 6th Edition (2025)
- Exhibition Planning & Project Management Workshop – GWU (2024)
- Print Identification Workshop – GWU (2024)
- New Media: Tech/AV/Sound Design for Exhibitions – GWU (2024)

Affiliations

- D.C. Science Writers Association (2025 – Present)
- Association for Materials and Methods in Paleontology (2025 – Present)
- Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2022 – Present)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (2026 – Present)
- Geological Society of America (2023 – Present)

Education

M.A. Museum Studies, Exhibitions & Visitor Experience — George Washington University, 2026

B.A. Geology, Paleontology — Appalachian State University, 2024 (*Magna Cum Laude*)

References

Available upon request.